

Information Note to the Press (Press Release No.12/2013)

For Immediate Release

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India

New Delhi, the 21st February, 2013: Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has today released a Regulation on 'Deactivation of Cellular Mobile Telephone Connections due to Non-usage'.

Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) currently prescribe a condition of deactivation if the mobile connections remain inactive for some period of time. TSPs contend that mobile connections in a state of continuous non-usage block scarce numbering resources and keeping such mobile connections active in the system for unduly long periods becomes non-remunerative. At present, there is lack of transparency in carrying out such disconnections. Consumers are also not adequately informed regarding the terms and conditions of such disconnections. In the event of deactivation, the balance amount in the account of the consumer gets forfeited. In such conditions, deactivation has been causing inconvenience to consumers.

The Telecom Consumers Protection (Sixth Amendment) Regulations, 2013 seeks to protect the interests of mobile consumers while keeping in mind the major concerns of TSPs in the matter of deactivation of SIMs. The Regulations inter-alia mandate that in case a TSP puts in place any mechanism for deactivation Cellular Mobile Telephone Connections due to non-usage, then he has to abide by the following regulatory guidelines :-

- (i) The mobile connections of prepaid consumers shall not be deactivated for any period of non-usage less than 90 days;
- (ii) For the purpose of usage, a voice call/ video call (incoming or outgoing) or an outgoing SMS or a data usage or usage of Value Added Services, or payment of rental (in case of post paid connection) etc. shall definitely fall in the scope of activity, the service provider may prescribe any other activity as well;
- (iii) There shall be no deactivation if the balance in prepaid consumer account is Rs.20/- or more;
- (iv) An 'Automatic Number Retention Scheme' shall be implemented for prepaid consumers on payment of reasonable charges;
- (v) A consumer whose connection is deactivated shall be given a grace period of 15 days within which he can reactivate the same number;
- (vi) Consumers shall be transparently communicated the terms and conditions of deactivation of SIMs due to non-usage.

The Regulations also mandate implementation of a 'Safe Custody Scheme' for postpaid consumers on payment of a reasonable charge. Such consumers will not be required to pay monthly rental during the period of safe custody;

The Regulations have been uploaded on TRAI's website (www.trai.gov.in). For any clarifications, on the above said Regulations, contact Shri Raj Pal, Advisor (F&EA), Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, Mahanagar Doorsanchar Bhawan, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, New Delhi-110002. (Tel. No. +91-11-23230752 Fax: +91-11-23236650, email ID: raj.pal@nic.in).

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